

1965

**THE OSKAR DIETHELM HISTORICAL LIBRARY**

FRIENDS OF THE OSKAR DIETHELM HISTORICAL LIBRARY  
ANNUAL REPORT  
1965

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When Dr. Oskar Diethelm was appointed Professor of Psychiatry at Cornell University Medical College in 1936, he brought with him the conviction that awareness of the historical development of psychiatric thought is an important constituent of one's understanding of the discipline today. Soon after his arrival, he started to collect significant works in the history of psychiatry in order to supply the necessary "laboratory equipment" for research in psychiatric history. This collection gradually grew to such proportions that a separate historical library was created in 1953, and on his retirement in 1962, it was named the Oskar Diethelm Historical Library in his honor. Careful consideration of the usefulness for actual historical investigations has always been a major criterion for deciding on acquisitions for the library, and since 1958 it has been the research facility for the section on the history of psychiatry and the behavioral sciences of the Department of Psychiatry.

In order to assist in supporting the library's growth, the Friends of the Oskar Diethelm Historical Library were organized in 1964 with Departmental and University approval. The ranks of the Friends have increased since the first year, and we are pleased to report that the 1965 membership was 75.

The library consists of a reference section and a collection of original psychiatric and related works that were published before 1920. A profile of the library's holdings is indicated in the following:

Monographs

3,811



Journals (44 titles)	1,209
Theses (before 1800)	210
Hospital reports	1,856
Reference works	1,610
	<hr/>
	8,696

There were 425 monographs, 8 periodicals and 2 early dissertations added to the library in 1965, of which 143 were purchased through the Friends' generosity. Contributions of volumes or funds for special purchases by individuals added the remainder to the collection.

Representative volumes purchased by the Friends in 1965 include:

Conolly, John, Manuscript letter to Dr. W. H. Ramsay. Hanwell [Asylum], September 14, 1852.

The library does not ordinarily seek manuscript material, since we are first and foremost a research library and since such material can be obtained on microfilm or in other reproductions. But occasionally a lucky find in the book market or the generosity of an individual allows us to acquire such an item. Conolly (1794-1866) was an important English asylum director and a leader in the non-restraint movement. He writes to Dr. Ramsay, who was also an important figure of his day, wishing him success as superintendent of Wyke House and discussing the need for "a good asylum...for those who can only pay £100 per annum."

Healy, William, HONESTY: A STUDY OF THE CAUSES AND TREATMENT OF DISHONESTY AMONG CHILDREN, Indianapolis, 1915.

MENTAL CONFLICTS AND MISCONDUCT, Boston, 1920 (1st published in 1917).

PATHOLOGICAL LYING, ACCUSATION, AND SWINDLING, Boston, 1915. (With Mary Tenney Healy)

These three volumes by William Healy illustrate another type of material which the library is adding to its collection. Healy was a pioneer in the investigation and rehabilitation of the juvenile delinquent and young psychiatric case. He founded the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute in Chicago in 1909, an event which was followed shortly by the opening of similar children's clinics at the Boston Psychopathic Hospital and Baltimore's Henry Phipps Clinic. Dr. Healy's clinical work and his writings were very influential in increasing the understanding of such children and in mobilizing the forces of society in treating and preventing their special problems. He discusses a variety of phenomena from gangs to petty thievery, emphasizing the child's inward mental life. Healy believed that few children were actually insane and that the sources of their early psychological problems as well as subsequent adult criminality were to be found in their social and family environment. He was an opponent of the then-popular theories which attributed a vast array of neurotic, psychotic and criminal behavior to "genetic degeneracy."

Rush, Benjamin, AN ORATION DELIVERED BEFORE THE  
AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY...CONTAINING  
AN ENQUIRY INTO THE INFLUENCE OF PHYSICAL  
CAUSES UPON THE MORAL FACULTY, Philadelphia,  
1786.

Of Rush's voluminous writings, this may in some ways be considered to be his most original contribution to psychiatry. His discussion of the "moral faculty" helped to extend psychiatric interest in this country from purely intellectual disturbances to include behav-



ioral disorders (including alcoholism and crime). Rush attempts through a systematic discussion of faculty psychology and function, to categorize and describe all such "moral," emotional or behavioral disorders in an integrated fashion and to relate them to physical malfunction.

Sydenham, Thomas, DE AFFECTIONE HYSTERICA, London, 1682.

This is a first edition of a most significant work in the history of hysteria. Sydenham wrote it in part in response to the urging of another well known contemporary, Dr. William Cole. Sydenham took a view of this illness which was unlike the then-prevalent one; most of his colleagues emphasized "convulsive" disorder of the nerves of the uterus and hence denied that males could be hysteric, or for converse reasons that women could be hypochondriacal. Sydenham stated that hysteria and hypochondriasis were the same illness, and that this illness was essentially a mental, not a physical one. Noting that hysteria could co-exist with disorders of a purely physical origin and that complaints of the hysteric mimic organic illnesses, Sydenham diagnosed a high percentage of his total cases as of hysterical origin -- one-sixth of his cases were thus described, including a considerable number of illls which the modern physician would not so designate.

Besides the volumes which were purchased through the donations of the Friends of the Oskar Diethelm Historical Library, we were the recipients of a number of additional volumes which were given to the library by individuals or were purchased through special contribu-

tions of money. Those who aided the library in one of these ways were: certain anonymous contributors, Dr. Arthur A. Anderson, Dr. Howard H. Ashbury, Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Blatt, Dr. and Mrs. Eric T. Carlson, Mr. Stephen Kern, Dr. Helen P. Langner, Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Simpson, and Dr. Hans Syz.

Among these volumes were the following:

Browne, Richard, MEDICINA MUSICA: OR A MECHANICAL ESSAY ON THE EFFECTS OF SINGING, MUSICK, AND DANCING ON HUMAN BODIES, London, 1729.

This charming little volume deals with a subject which is very old in the history of psychiatry. But though the topic is an ancient one, Browne's book has the distinction of being the earliest English work devoted entirely to the use of music in medicine. Browne was "an obscure apothecary" of Oakham, Rutland, England, and began the book while he was still an apprentice. He describes how music increases the flow of "animal spirits" in the body and invigorates both the physical and mental activity of man. Appended to this second edition (the first was published in 1727) is Browne's essay on the "Spleen and Vapours."

Trotter, Thomas, AN ESSAY, MEDICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL, AND CHEMICAL, ON DRUNKENNESS, Boston, 1813.

VIEW OF THE NERVOUS TEMPERAMENT, New York, 1808.

Thomas Trotter (ca. 1760-1832) was an English physician who spent most of his life in the service of the Navy. During his career he wrote on various subjects, including sanitation, chemistry and naval medicine, but these two volumes represent perhaps his outstanding contribution to psychiatry. The VIEW OF THE NERVOUS TEMPERAMENT was, discounting a few M.D. dissertations,



the first book on psychiatry printed in America. The American edition which we have was a reprint of the first London edition of 1807. Trotter discusses a wide variety of neurotic complaints which were frequently either omitted from such discussions or else were forced into major categories such as mania, melancholy, hysteria or hypochondriasis. His interest in alcoholism began with his M.D. thesis (*DE EBRIETATE, EJUSQUE EFFECTIBUS IN CORPUS HUMANUM*, Edinburgh, 1788), a copy of which, incidentally, we have in our collection of dissertations. Fifteen years later he returned to the subject, enlarging and revising his ideas in the above volume. Trotter emphasizes the inadequacy of moralistic or punitive attitudes towards the alcoholic who "already knows ...that the indulgence is pernicious, and ultimately fatal." He discusses all aspects of the subject -- causes, physical and mental manifestations, legal responsibility, and treatment. He comes to the important conclusion that, "The habit of drunkenness is a disease of the mind."

A research library such as the Oskar Diethelm Historical Library requires a highly specialized knowledge on the part of those persons who aid in searching the rare book market and selecting books for purchase. The manner in which research in our library has strengthened the collection can be demonstrated in the work of one of the members of our Section. Dr. Oskar Diethelm is working on certain topics related to Renaissance psychiatry, among them Renaissance discussions of sexual excitements and sexual psychopathology. His knowledge of the literature has enabled him with the aid of anonymous donors to add to the collection:



Erastus, Thomas, COMITIS MONTANI VICENTINI NOUI MED-  
ICORUM CENSORIS, QUINQUE LIBORUM DE MORBIS,  
Basel, 1581.

Thomas Erastus (1524-1583) was Professor of Medicine at Basel and later in Heidelberg. He was a famous humanist and was known for his attacks on Paracelsus. This book consists of dissertations written under him -- an interesting collection of Renaissance writings of this type.

The following books recently added to the library also relate to the focus of Dr. Diethelm's projects:

de Mercato, Luiz, DE MULIERUM AFFECTIONIBUS, Venice,  
1597.

Luiz de Mercato was an important Spanish physician of the 16th century (1520-1606), Professor of Medicine in Valladolid, and physician to Philippe II. This book, which was added to the library in 1964, contains a discussion of sexual excitement.

Astruc, Jean, TRAITE DES MALADIES DES FEMMES,  
Avignon, 1763.

Jean Astruc (1684-1766) was Professor of Anatomy, and later Professor of Medicine in Montpellier and Paris. Astruc's contribution was in the field of venereal disease. The above book consists of three volumes and contains the best description of his time of sexual excitement and sexual disorders in women, as well as hysteria. Although the book is written in French, the careful description of sexual excitement is printed in Latin and has been translated for publication by a Payne Whitney staff member.

Other books in our collection which relate to this research topic include DE UNIVERSA MULIEBRIUM MORBORUM

MEDICINA: NOVO ET ANTEHAC A NEMINE TENTATO ORDINE... by Roderici à Castro (1546-1627). The author was a Portuguese physician who lived in Hamburg. The book contains a discussion of sexual psychopathology observed in Germany. Another is by James Primerose, a graduate of Montpellier and Oxford, who wrote DE MULIERUM MORBIS (Rotterdam, 1655). More recently, in 1966, we received the volume TROIS LIVRES APPARTENANS AUX INFIRMITÉZ ET MALADIES DES FEMMES by Jean Liébault (1535-1596). It is written in Renaissance French and discusses sexual psychopathology as well as the customs of the Renaissance period. This book was published in 1598. The library now has all of the known major works published in this particular segment of psychiatric history before the year 1800.



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\*The Friends of the Library note with regret the death in December 1965 of Mr. Miller.

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\*We are sorry that Dr. Reese's name was unaccountably omitted from our list of 1964 charter members of the Friends.